



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF



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9 AUGUST 1966

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1. South Vietnam

The Buddhists are mounting a new effort to get international attention and make next month's elections as difficult as possible.

On Saturday the Buddhist Association fired off a letter to the UN complaining of government "oppression" and "mistaken US policy." Next came a communiqué from the association demanding a civilian government now and calling on all the faithful to boycott the elections for a constitutional convention.

The Buddhists probably do not have the strength to risk summoning up the street mobs again--their political line is getting a little threadbare, even for Vietnam. But their malice runs deep, and they clearly intend to contribute any disruptive background noises possible as elections draw near.

2. North Vietnam

The skipper of a Chinese Communist merchant ship in Haiphong harbor last month was stopped by the North Vietnamese when he fired on US aircraft overhead.

A European merchant officer who watched the episode through binoculars reports that port officials told him later they had ordered the Chinese to knock it off for fear US pilots would return fire and endanger other shipping in the harbor.

3. South Vietnam

Malaria appears to be a major problem among Communist troops. Prisoners, defectors, and captured documents all point to a high incidence with some units reporting almost every guerrilla ill. Of 20 prisoners captured on 6 August, at least half had malaria.

4. Communist China

Peking now seems to be trying to keep the "cultural purification" drive from getting further out of hand and to reduce the confusion and fear it has created in recent months.

Yesterday, the party Central Committee issued a directive saying that students should not be treated "severely" and that scientists and technicians should receive special protection from political harassment. Although the "cultural revolution" is to continue, it will be kept under direct party control.

Mao has sometimes in the past overridden the Central Committee, and there have been some increasingly tough pronouncements on domestic affairs in the past few days.

5. Soviet Union

The latest satellite photography, the first from the new very high resolution camera system, has provided the best coverage to date of the Tyuratam Missile Test Center. Construction continues rapidly at the two pads that are to support very large space boosters. Detailed study of the new pictures will provide new insights into this important new system, which probably is associated with a Soviet manned lunar program.

6. East Germany

The regime is showing increased concern over public unrest, which was growing even before a set of unpopular price increases was decreed last month. This is apparently the explanation for a big parade planned for East Berlin this Saturday, the fifth anniversary of the erection of the Berlin Wall. It seems intended to discourage the kind of antiregime demonstrations that have occurred on other recent anniversaries.

7. West Germany

Erhard's political problems may be aggravated by his growing difficulties over the budget. He could be faced with the unhappy choice of either squeezing the budget or asking for a tax increase.

If he decides on budget cuts, he may well look to the Defense Ministry. This, in turn, would run directly counter to US and British military offset requests.

8. France

De Gaulle's popularity at home has risen significantly since his return from Moscow. The latest poll, taken by the most reputable French polling outfit, gives him a higher rating than he has enjoyed since early 1962 (65 percent satisfied, 26 dissatisfied, 9 no opinion).

Some Gaullist political leaders will urge early national parliamentary elections, which must in any case be held before next March. They could come as early as this autumn.

9. Dominican Republic

President Balaguer, in office now for nearly six weeks, seems intent on reducing the political potential of some of the more reactionary military officers. Some of these officers, who had looked on Balaguer's comeback as a chance to feather their own nests, will be cut down to size by a series of organizational changes in the armed forces Balaguer directed last weekend.

Just to be on the safe side, Balaguer wants to complete the changes before the scheduled departure next month of the last units of the Inter-American Peace Force.

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